

THE E. 10. 22
PRESENT MISERIES
AND
Mischiefs of Sin.

Discourfed in
A SERMON
Before the late *Lord Mayor* of *London*.
At *Guild-Hall* Chappel.

By *Robert Wensley*, Vicar of *Chestnut* in *Hertfordshire*;
and Chaplain to the Right Honourable *JAMES*,
Earl of *SALISBURY*; Knight of the most Noble
Order of the Garter.

L O N D O N,

Printed for *Benj. Tooke*, at the *Ship* in *St. Paul's*
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PRESENT MISERIES
AND
Mischief of Sin.

A SERMON

Preached by the Rev. John W. Mason of London
At GUILD-HALL Chapel.

Printed by W. B. Mason, at the Sign of the Ship in St. Pauls
Church-Yard, MDCCLXXXII.

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To the Honoured Lady

THE LADY

REBECCA LYTTON;

Relict of Sir ROWLAND LYTTON,
Late of *Knebworth* in *Hertfordshire*, Knt. And
to her most Hopeful Son, Mr. Playters *Lucy*.

IN Obedience to your desires (which
by reason of my many Obligations to
you both, ought by me to be esteemed
as Commands) having perused my
Discourse, and added to it what I
thought expedient, and considering
in what manner I should (in An-
swer to your Request) present it to
you; after some consideration I have
chosen to do it in the most. publick
manner that I could.

Not only for that common reason,
(though I think that may be sufficient
to acquit me from Ostentation) viz.
That I might publickly acknowledge

The Epistle Dedicatory.

how much I am obliged to you : But because by my long Acquaintance with your Vertues, I am fully assured that this Sermon can scarcely meet with any Readers who have less need of it than either of you. Wherefore I concluded, that since you were pleased to think it useful for your selves in private, it might be much more beneficial to others in publick.

For as for your Ladiship, I must beg pardon of your modesty to say that your great Prudence and Piety, is a sufficient guard against all Temptations to those Sins which in this following Discourse are proved Guilty of all the Miseries and Mischiefs of Mankind.

And as for that Worthy Gentleman your Son (whom I cannot but be proud to call my Pupil) all that have had the happiness to have been

The Epistle Dedicatory.

acquainted with him from his Childhood, (as I have) cannot but Love and Honour him for his Vertues, which seem innate in him, being so constantly Visible in all his Actions. For I should be unjust to him, if I should not say that I always knew him of that sweetness and evenness of Temper, as though he had no Passion in him, but a desire to oblige all Persons with whom he conversed, nor any excess but an excess of Kindness; and this joyned with such a quickness of Apprehension, and business^m of Action, that I may (I think without any Complement) say of him that he seems so made by Nature, as if God had on purpose framed him to demonstrate the Beauty and Loveliness of Vertue to all those of his Quality in this Degenerate Age.

The Epistle Dedicatory.

For so naturally is he inclined to all Good, and averse from anything that is Evil, that one would almost think that he alone was exempted from that general Corruption and Depravity of Nature, which all other Men derive from Adam. So that since I so fully know that this Sermon could be of no great use to either of you, and since I should be ungrateful should I have denyed your Request, I hope you will Pardon me, if I perform it in such a manner as it may be useful to such, to whom it is most necessary; in confidence of which, (wishing to you both all the Happiness of this World, and that which is to come) I take leave to Subscribe my self.

Your most obliged

humbla Servant.

Rob. Wensley.

P R O V.

PROV. 11. v. 19. last part.

*He that pursueth Evil, pursueth it
to his own Death.*

IF ever Words were worthy of our utmost Attention, surely these may lay a just Claim to it ; whether we respect the Author of them, or the matter contained in them.

As for the Author, he is no Melancholy, Monastick, or humorous Book-Worm, that takes things upon trust, as he finds them in his reading, or as he fancies them in himself ; no interested Priest that rails against Sin, because he lives by such Declamations ; no malicious or envious Cynick that barks at the Pleasures of others, because he himself is not in a Capacity to enjoy them, (as the little Wits of our Age, are apt to Object) but the greatest of Princes, and the Wisest of Men: One, who had in Possession the greatest Riches, and was inducd by God with the greatest Wisdom, to know how to enjoy them ; who was the best Experimental Philosopher that ever was, or ever will be in the World: For (as he himself tells us) he gave himself to try all things, and deried himself nothing to that end. *For (saith he) so great*

Ecclesiast. 10. 11. 12.

The Present Miseries

was I, and so much did I encrease in Riches and Pleasures above all that were before me in Jerusalem; (and lest we should Object that he had by these Pleasures lost his Understanding, he tells us) and my Wisdom remained with me: And how he employed his Wisdom he also tells us, *Whatsoever mine Eyes desired, I held not from them, I withdrew not my Soul from any Pleasure, &c.* and an Account of all things he there gives us, *I looked upon all the Works which my hands had wrought, and behold all is Vanity and Vexation of Spirit.* This is all the sad Account that his Experience gives him of all his Glory and Delights; but, a much sadder Account he gives us of the Pleasures of Evil in the Words of the Text. *He that pursueth Evil, pursueth it to his own Death.* And this leads me to consider the matter of them which may much more recommend them to our most serious Consideration.

For they contain in them the most forcible Argument to prevail with all Men to forsake their Sins.

For though some may be so senseless as to put the Evil Day far from them; or so stupid as to think it may never come upon them, and to doubt of a future State; or though some may be so foolish to glory in their present shame; yet none (one would think) who hath any Reason left in him, (if he does duly consider that the Prosecuting his Evil Courses, will certainly be his utter and immediate Ruine) can be so mad to pursue his own Present Misery, or to Labour for his Immediate Death, and Destruction.

The

and Mischiefs of Sin.

3

The words are so plain, that they need no further Explication, only we may take notice, that by Death in Scripture Language, is meant, not only the Dissolution of our Bodies, but all kind of present Afflictions and Miseries. So St. Paul * saith, that he was *in Deaths often*, (that is) * 2 Corinth. c. 11. v. 23. often under the greatest Miseries and Troubles, for it is certain he could Die but once.

And in this Sence I shall take the words of the Text, and endeavour to manifest to you, by an Induction of Particulars, this general Proposition contained in them, viz.

“That any one Sin being contained in, and pursued, doth (by its direct Consequence, and by a Chain of Natural Causes) lead us into such Actions and Dangers, as tend to our present Misery and Destruction.

continued

This, we have the experience of Solomon to confirm to us: And our own experience (if we will but give our selves time to consider it, and to take a view of the most common Sins) will be sufficient to convince us of their most dangerous and fatal Consequence.

And first if we take a View of the Sins against God, we cannot but see that Danger and Misery are the natural effects of them. *1. The Sins against God.*

For (besides that, they provoke God to pour down the Vials of his Wrath upon us) by so much as we are Remiss in our Duties to God, by so much we loosen the Reins to all Sin; by how much we fail in Religion, by so much we fail of any tye upon our Lusts, which being let loose would soon hurry us into all Misery and Ruin.

B

For

The Present Miseries

For, he that is not governed by Principles of Religion, can reasonably be supposed to have no other Law to himself, but that of his present Satisfaction and Interest; and that is nothing else, but his own Phanſie. For, if he thinks it his greatest Interest or Pleasure, to ſatisfie any Luſt whatſoever, tho' it be never ſo fooliſh or brutiſh; then that particular Luſt which is his Delight, is the only Rule by which he governs his whole Life; nor can any thing reſtrain him from any Act, (tho' it be never ſo fatal to himſelf, or to all Mankind) ſo it be not contrary to his beloved Luſt. For, as for Shame or Diſgrace, where he is not ſenſible of any Fault, he can never be capable of any Shame.

And ſo far will he that hath no Religion be from thinking it a Fault to gratifie his Pleaſures, that he will eſteem all others Fools, that do not act like himſelf, in endeavouring by all means, to ſatisfie his reigning Appetites.

For, with him nothing is good and commendable, but what tends to the Satisfaction of his predominant Luſt: nor can any thing therefore be thought ill or blameable, that does any ways promote his preſent Deſigns, though they be never ſo deſtructive to himſelf, or all other men.

And as for fear of Laws, that indeed might oblige him, for his preſent Preſervation, to act his Villanies privately, but not at all to avoid any of them, tho' they are never ſo wicked and horrid: Nay, it would not oblige the moſt of men, if they had caſt off all Tyes of Conſcience, ſo far as this: For, if they are under any kind of Diſcon-

content or Necessity, their Lusts having ruin'd them in this Life, and they expecting nothing of Reward or Punishment in that which is to come, they can look upon Death it self (which is the utmost penalty of Humane Laws) as no such frightful Monster, but rather, as their best Friend; *i. e.* as a final End of all their Miseries and Troubles. So certain it is, that those that profess themselves Atheists, are to be looked upon by all considerate men, as the plague of the World, and universal Enemies to all Mankind. For, they that have little else to loose but their Lives, and value not them, (as the irreligious man is taught by his Principles of Atheism; not to do) are Masters of the Lives and Fortunes of all other men; for nothing can restrain them from taking away either of them, when their Lusts or Necessities prompt them to it.

This I am heartily sorry to think, that the Wickedness of this Age hath made too apparent to need any other proof; wherein we may have seen some grown shameless in their Crimes, (and Thanks be to God, that after Religion was so shamefully abused, and drawn in, to countenance the most horrid Crimes in the last Age, we have not more Atheists in this) yet a sad Sight it is, how small soever the number may be, to see any such Factors for the Devil, and Hectors for Sin, that are ready to fight their Quarrels against all Opposers, that are grown so impudent in their impious Facts, that they are ready to deride and affront all others that are not as wicked as themselves; and to account them men of low and

The Present Miseries

mean Understandings, whose Villanies do not extend as high as Heaven it self. Such as pride themselves in their infamous Debaucheries, and cry down other men, as persons of a base Spirit, who dare not make Sport with Religion, and bid Defiance to the Sacred Name of God, by prophane Oaths and Blasphemies.

Neither do they stop here, but proceed to all kind of Mischiefs to themselves, and Injuries to others: For, no sooner have they laid aside Religion, but they are ready for all kind of Perjuries and Forgeries; for Fire, Poyson, or Poniard, or any thing else that may any ways contribute to the Satisfaction of their Lusts. Neither Pitty to others, nor Care of themselves, can restrain them from either Theft or Murder, or any other Wickedness, that may tend to the Gratification of their reigning Appetites.

How do they offer up their own Bodies a burnt Sacrifice to *Venus*, and destroy their Health, by their Oblations to *Bacchus*? Nay, rather than they will want a Supply for their Lusts, How do they forfeit their Lives to the Laws, and offer up all things that can be dear to them, to their own Humours? to obtain which, How do they give up their Souls and Bodies even to the Devil himself?

These, by breaking the Bonds of Religion, and casting away its Cords from them, do destroy all Society, and not only involve themselves, but all Mankind, in Misery and Ruin, by the direct Consequence of their Atheistical Principles. For, if there be no God, then there can be no
such

such thing as Right or Wrong, Just or Unjust; and, by consequence, nothing but Confusion. And this brings me to consider the Danger and Mischief of the next sort of Sins. *Viz.*

Secondly, The Sins against our Neighbour.

2. The Sins
against our
Neighbour.

These are of these two sorts, Injustice and Uncharitableness; which (if we consider them) will manifestly appear of the most dangerous and fatal Consequence to all Mankind. For, Justice and Charity are the main Pillars of the World; so that he which pulls down these, ruins all Society, and renders the World a mere Heap of Rubbish.

The love of the Company of their own kind, seems a Principle ingrafted in the very Nature of all living Creatures, it is so universally visible amongst them, *is*. He therefore that casts off the Love of his Neighbour, is worse than the Brute Beasts, and more unnatural than any of them.

But where this Charity to all Mankind is rooted in the Heart, it shews it self in such blessed Effects, as (if they were universal) would change men into Angels or Gods, continually doing all Good to one another; and this Earth into Heaven. For, *Charity* (* as St. Paul describes it) *suffereth long and is kind, Charity envieth not; Charity vaunteth not it self, is not puffed up; doth not behave it self unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no Evil, &c.*

* 1 Cor. 13.
from v. 4. to
v. 8.

Now, if these were universally practis'd amongst men, how happy should we be? What a blessed and uninterrupted Peace and Kindness? What an immutable Happiness would mutually bless us?

The Present Miseries

But on the contrary, Injustice and Uncharitableness would turn the World into a Desert, and men into Wolves and Tigers; and make them act one against another with more Cruelty and Fierceness, than the most Savage Beasts.

These, if they should once be universal (which God forbid) would change humane Friendship into a State of War; in which, every man's hand would be lift up against every man.

Property would be an empty Name, and no other Right or Title would hold good, but that of the longest Sword: And, in a Word, nothing but Horror and Confusion would overspread the World: the Kingdoms of the Earth would be like the Kingdoms of Darkness, fill'd with nothing but Rage and Howling; and men would be chang'd into Devils, continually tormenting one another, and being tormented one by another.

For, they that have cast from them all the Tyes of Charity, which is the Bond of Perfection, and all the Laws of Equity, the only Cords of a man, (that can bind those furious Philistines their head-strong Passions) are given up to be mutually tortured by those implacable Furies of Impatience and Anger, Pride and Covetousness, Envy and Malice, the natural Parents of all Misery, and of all Mischief, as well to themselves, as to all others with whom they converse.

And this now directly leads me to discourse the miserable Effects of the next sort of Sins. *Viz.*

3. Sins against
our selves.

Thirdly, The Sins against our Selves.

These may be reduced to these two sorts.

First, Those of Intemperance, or Excess of Riot.

Se-

and Mischiefs of Sin.

9

Secondly, Those of Excess of Passion..

Both of them may most properly be called Sins against our Selves; for they are of most fatal consequence, most commonly, to their own Authors.

Of the first sort, *viz.* the Sins of Intemperance, *Sins of Intemperance.* are these two, Drunkenness and Gluttony.

What Words are sad enough to express, or what Tears are sufficient to bewail the Miseries that men bring upon themselves by these Sins? *i. Drunkenness.*

What Diseases are there so fatal, what Crimes so black and horrid, or what Accidents so dangerous, to which Drunkenness doth not expose us?

He that is possess'd with this Vice, is in his case who was possess'd with the Devil, of whom we read in the * Gospel. *He is mad and tormented, and oftentimes he falls into the Fire, and oftentimes into the Water.* *Math. 17. 15.*

Nay indeed he is in a much worse Condition, for Strong Drink doth so much inflame him, that it burns up his Vitals with a scorching Fever; or so fires his Spirits, that they are exploded in the deadly Stroke of an Apoplexy: nay, too often it hath a quite contrary effect, and raiseth such a Flood of Filth and Water in his Body, that it buries him alive in a Lethargy, or else drowns him in a Dropsie.

But if by a constant Practice, or by the particular Constitution of a man's Body, it be sometimes prevented from making a man become his own Murderer; yet it too often raiseth such Heats and Quarrels, as make his chosen Companions to become his Executioners; for oft times
if

The Present Miseries

if he doth not kill his best Friends with his own hands, he dies by theirs; and so Murders himself by the hands of his Friends, and kills them too by the hand of Justice.

* Prov. 23.
v. 29, 30, 31.

To this purpose, the * Wise Man discourseth, (possibly from his own Experience) *Who hath Woe? Who hath Sorrow? Who hath Contentions? Who hath Wounds without cause? &c. They that tarry long at the Wine, they that go to seek mixt Wine: Therefore (saith he) look not thou upon the Wine when it hath its right color and sparkleth in the Cup; and the reason he gives I wish all Men would constantly remember, viz. For at the last it biteth like a Serpent, and stingeth like an Adder.* (i.e.) However we may escape for some time, yet at length it will certainly destroy us.

But suppose that by God's Providence none of the too common, though Mortal, Diseases or Fatal Quarrels be the effects of Drunkenness upon our selves; yet it may have some of these fatal Consequences upon our Friends and Companions, and so our very kindnesses may become their Murderers, or else at least it exposeth a Man to the most shameful and odious Actions. Thus it exposed *Noah* (though a Preacher of Righteousness) to be the scorn and shame of his own Off-spring: And it made *Lot* (a Man so good that God sent his Angels to deliver him from the Flames of *Sodom*) to commit Folly and Incest with his own Daughters: And no wonder it should hurry us into Folly or Mischief, when it deprives us of our Reason; and
he

and Mischiefs of Sin.

II

and (for the present) leaves no more of Man visible in us than there is in the Ridiculous Ape whilst he plays his Monkey-tricks, or in the Filthy Swine, whilst it wallows in the Mire; so fully evident is that Saying of Solomon. *Wine is a Mocker*; *Strong Drink is rageing, and whosoever is deceived thereby is a Fool.* Prov. 20.1.

And for that other excess of Riot, viz.

Secondly, Gluttony.

It is no less dangerous than the former: Nay it is by so much the more Fatal, by how much it's deadly Operations are less perceived; for this Vice steals upon us insensibly and kills us (as it is said of white Gunpowder) though with no noise, yet with more certain Execution, and at a far greater distance. 2. Gluttony.

Drunkennes (indeed) blows up a Man on a suddain, and so apparently, that all that are near must needs see it: But Gluttony though it is slow, yet it is sure in it's Execution.

It proceeds by insensible Degrees, and too often is not perceiv'd in it's Acts, till it appears in it's incurable effects.

By silent Motions it corrupts the Stomach, and fills it with Crudities; and by consequence stuffs up the Body with indigested Food, and ill fermented Blood; and thus renders a Man (like a Living Hospital) full of nothing but Filth, and all manner of Diseases.

For notwithstanding (too commonly) we are not aware of it; yet I am confident, it is true, that *Luxury* hath short'ned more Mens Days, and destroyed more of our Lives, than those three grand Destroyers of Mankind, *War,*

C

Famine,

The Present Miseries

Famine, and *Pestilence*, put altogether. And if we should compare these two Sins together, which I have last mentioned, it may (I think) be too truly said of them which was said of *Saul* and *David*. *Drunkennes hath slain it's Thousands, and Gluttony it's Ten Thousands*. Neither are these the only dangerous Excesses. For the Excess of any Irregular Passion, renders a Man, no less miserable than either of the former. Nay so like they are, that even in the Sacred Scriptures they are sometimes expressed by *Drunkennes*.

* Isaiah 51.
29.

* Revelat. 17.
6.

Thus we read of the House of *Israel*, that * *they are Drunken, but not with Wine*: And St. *John* tells us in his * Revelations. That he saw the *Woman Drunk with the Blood of the Saints*. And (indeed) when any Irregular Passion doth possess our Souls, we may too truly be said to be *Drunk* with it: And this kind of *Drunkennes* is no less Destructive to our present Happiness, than the former.

To instance in some of the most common of them. As,

1. *Anger*.

First, *Anger*.

He that is intoxicated with *Anger*, is no less besides himself than he that is *Drunk* with *Wine*; and is exposed, like him, to the same Fatal Diseases, Crimes, and Dangers. For *Anger* is a present Madness: And only differs from it not in it's Degree, but in it's Duration. It so strangely heats our Blood, and puts it into such violent Fermentations, that it is to me a wonder it doth not at least break our Veins, if not our Hearts. It so much fires our Animal Spirits, and puts them

them into such strange, and such violently disturb'd Motions, that it naturally ends in Tremblings and Swoonings, together with all those Mortal Diseases that arise from the disturbance of the Nerves, and the Indisposition of the Brain.

A Dreadful Example the * Historian gives us of Sylla the Roman General, at Puteoli, who being delayed in his necessary Supplies of Money, fell into such a Rage, that with a Furious Noise, and Violent Convulsions, *he vomited up his Soul, mixt with Blood and Threatnings*; and this so suddenly that it was a question (saith my Author) *whether Sylla or his Anger was first Dead?* * Valer. Max. Lib. 9. Sect. 8.

This Passion if it be in Excess, so disorders our Stomachs, that it turns our very Nourishment into sharp Humours. For whatsoever we Eat or Drink in Anger, turns into Choler; and so Nourisheth not our Bodies, but our Diseases. Neither can he that gives himself up to this Fury, be secure from falling into the most Deadly Crimes, or the most Fatal Dangers. For having quite lost his Reason, and being governed whilst his Passion lasts, by nothing but his Rage, it is more the Care of others, or God's Providence, than his own, that keeps him from Imbruing his Hands in his own Blood, or in the Blood of his nearest Relations, or dearest Friends.

Thus * Alexander the Great, in a Drunken Fury, with his own Hands, kill'd one of his best Friends, and most Valiant Commanders, the Generous and Aged *Clytus*; and afterwards with the Horrour of the Fact, he fell into so great a Rage against himself, that had he not

* Vid. Notas. Otiogri in Valer. Max. fig. 5. pag. 775.

The Present Miseries

been prevented by the Care of his Friends, the same Hand and Weapon that had kill'd *Clytus*, had dispatch'd *Alexander*.

To add no more concerning Anger, so Mad and Rageing; so Cruel and Bloody is this Passion, that had not God made it as short as it is Violent, it would long before this time have turned the World into a Desolate Wilderness, and have made Mankind more Savage and Bloody-minded one towards another, than the worst and cruellest of the Wild Beasts.

And what I have said of Anger, is, for the most part, true, of any other immoderate Passion that seizeth upon our Souls.

I shall give some few Instances more of the most common Lusts of Mankind, and the Miseries they bring along with them, *viz. Uncleanneſs, Covetouſneſs, Voluptuousneſs, Envy and Ambition*; every one of which upon an Impartial View, will be found no less guilty of all kind of Mischiefs than the former.

1. *Uncleanneſs*
or Lust.

For First, as to *Uncleanneſs* or *Lustfulneſs*.

What Diseases are so nauseous, or what more destructive, than those that are the Effects of Lust? So filthy they are; that they are not fit to be named; and so Painful and Mortal, that he that is infected with them, suffers even an Hell upon Earth, and Dyes by Piece-meal; living to see some of his Members turn'd into Rotteneſs, and his whole Body chang'd into a Walking Sepulchre, fill'd with nothing but Stench and Corruption within, however it may be adorned and painted without.

To

To this purpose *Solomon* most probably from his own Experience, tells us, (and who can we better believe in this case than he that had such an Army of Wives and Concubines?) That he that followeth a strange (i.e. an Adulterous) Woman *goeth after her straightway as an Oxe goeth to the Slaughter; or as a Fool to the Correction of the Stocks: Till a Dart striketh through his Liver: as a Bird hasteth to the Snare and knoweth not that it is for his Life. Wherefore in the following Words he gives us this most excellent Advice, grounded upon the firmest and most forcible Reason. * Harken unto me therefore O ye *Ibid. v. 24, 25, Children, and attend to the Words of my Mouth.* 25, 27. Let not thine Heart decline to her wayes; go not astray in her paths. For she hath cast down many wounded: yea many strong Men have been slain by her. Her House is the way to Hell, going down to the Chambers of Death.

Why should I farther mention the particular dangers and mischiefs that this Vice exposeth us to? For what Danger can be so great to which this Sin doth not oblige him who hath given up himself to it? Or what Crimes are so horrid, to which it doth not expose it's Followers to prevent the Discovery of their Shame?

It forceth even Mothers to be more Cruel and Bloody than the most Ravenous Wolves, or the most Savage Tygers, in taking away the Lives of their most Innocent Off-spring, when (by the mere Instect of Nature) the worst of Beasts will defend their young ones, even with the hazard of themselves.

What

The Present Miseries

What Dangers does not a man venture at in the very Act of this Sin, whilst he commits his Life into the hands of such persons, whom he knows are false to all Tyes of *Religion, Honour, or Honesty*.

What Murders, and what Desolations hath not this Sin been the Cause of, either through the Jealousie and Revenge of the Friends of the injured Party, or from the immediate hand of God?

I need seek no farther than the Holy Scriptures for the most visible Examples.

* *Prov.* 6. 34. For, (as the Wise Man tells us) * *Jealousie is the Rage of a man*, and is no less || *cruel than the Grave*, sparing none that comes in its way.

* *Vid.* 2 *Sam.* chap. 13. * *Achnon* had no sooner defiled his Sister *Tamar*, but his Death is immediately design'd, and soon after, treacherously executed by his Brother *Abalom*.

The *Sechemites* having deflowr'd *Dinah*, are all (under the shew of Friendship) butcher'd by her Brethren, who think their Blood little enough to wash off that Stain they had brought upon their Family. For, all the Excuse they make for so many and so bloody Murders, is only this ;
Genes. 34. 31. *Should he deal with our Sister as with an Harlot?*

But, suppose nothing of this should happen from men, yet what Punishments may not be expected from God, who hath told us, by *St. Paul*,
 * *Hebr.* 13. 4. * *Whore-mongers and Adulterers he will judge?*
 For God hath given us most dreadful Examples of his Vengeance upon unclean persons in * *Sodom* and *Gomorrah*. When nothing else would extinguish their Flames of Lust, God pours down

down Showrs of flaming Brimstone upon them, and utterly destroys them. But, tho' no extraordinary Judgment from God should follow this Vice, yet he hath made it ordinarily a sufficient Punishment to it self. For, what with the Filthiness and Folly that accompanies it, together with the Loathings and Shame that certainly follow it, how doth every Act of this Sin become a Torture to it's silly Votaries?

The lustful *Amnon* was sick for love of *Tamar*, but, no sooner had he committed Folly with her, but he is sick with loathing her: * For, the Text tells us, *He hated her exceedingly; so that the Hatred wherewith he hated her, was greater than the Love wherewith he had loved her.* And his Actions demonstrate it; for he that but just before could not live without her Company, cannot now endure her Sight, but is glad to use as much Violence to be rid of her, as he had before made use of to enjoy her.

* 2 Sam. 13.
15. & 16.

Lastly, How is the man of Uncleanneſs exposed to all sorts of Crimes and Dangers, either to gratifie his Paramour, or to find Fuel for the unquenchable Fire of his Lust?

For having hereby consumed his Estate, (which was it as great as the *Indies*, would be little enough to spend upon this one Lust) for, (as the * wisest of men tells us) *by means of an Adulterous Woman, a man is brought to a Morſel of Bread.* How is he forced, by the worst of means, to supply the ever-craving, but never satisfied Desires of his Minion, or himself.

* Prov. c. 6.

In a word, so much doth this one Vice beset Mankind, that it hath rendred the strongest of men

men so weak and inconsiderable, that he became the Scorn of the meanest of his Enemies.

* Josephus Antiquit. Judaic.

It hath rob'd the man after God's own Heart, of his Justice and Religion, and drew him into the worst and most unnatural of all Sins, even Murder it self; and (to say no more) it made a Fool of the wisest of men, and rendred him (* as the Jewish Historian tells us) contemptible to his own Subjects, who had been fam'd and reverenc'd through the World for his former Wisdom.

2. Covetousness.

But secondly, *Covetousness* is no less dangerous, and mischievous than the former.

1 Tim. c. 6. v. 9. & 10.

For, if we will believe the Apostle St. Paul, he tells us, *They that will be rich, fall into Temptation, and a Snare, and into many foolish and hurtful Lusts, which drown men in Destruction: for the love of Money is the Root of all Evil; which while some coveted after, they have pierced themselves through with many Sorrows.*

And this is fully visible to any one, whose Eyes the God of this World hath not blinded. For he that hath given up his Soul to Covetousness, hath condemned himself to the worst of Punishments; that is, to a Labour, which, as it never ceaseth, so it, is ever vain and fruitless: For, to satisfy a covetous Mind with Riches, is as impossible, as to fill a Sieve with Water, which empties as fast as it is poured in.

How doth the man of Covetousness rob himself of all Quiet and Content, in enjoying what he hath, by his constant and violent Desires after that which he hath not? What incessant pains doth he undergo in getting his Wealth? How is he macerated with continual Care and Trou-

Trouble in keeping it ? How is he wrack'd and
tortur'd with the anxious Fears of losing it ?
Or lastly, How is he expos'd to all Crimes and
Dangers in the Pursuit of it ; and oft times, to
Death it self ; if not in the Pursuit of it, yet
in the parting with it ?

Thus * *Ptolomy*, King of *Cyprus*, having, by his
vast Riches, invited the *Romans* to pillage him,
not being able to out-live the loss of his Treasure,
put an end to his miserable Life, by a dose of
Poyson. So truly, may it be said of the cove-
tous man's Gold, that it is like *Achan's Wedge*,
An accursed thing, that too often cleaves his own
Heart. For, if his own restless and insatiable
Desires do not execute him, oftentimes he meets
with *Achan's Fate*, his Theft is discovered, and
the hand of Justice becomes his Executioner. * *Josh. 7. 20.*

For, whoever gives up his Soul to the Love
of Money, can never be secure from any other
Crime, tho' he endangers not only himself, but
sacrifices whole Nations to the God of this
World, the only Deity that he worships.

A memorable Example the * *Roman Orator*
gives us of the rich General *Craffus*, who having,
for no other cause, but his own Covetousness,
waged War against the *Parthians*, lost not only
his own Life, but the Lives of many of the *Ro-*
man Legions: And when he was slain, his Ene-
mies made sport with his Corps, and pouring
melted Gold into his Mouth, they thus justly re-
proach'd his covetous Life ; saying, *Aurum sitiisti,*
Aurum bibe. Thou hast thirsted after Gold, drink
now thy Fill of it : thereby, plainly intimating
that there is no other ways to satisfy a covetous
man's

The Present Miseries

man's Mind with Gold, but by filling his Mouth full of melted Or.

So great a Temptation is the Insatiable Love of Money to all kind of evil, that it would be infinite to Relate all the Injustice, Murders, Treasons, Rebellions, and Sacriledges; that it hath been the cause of: But the Poet hath done all this in one question, when in Detestation of the horrid Murder of King Priam's Son, for the sake of the Gold left for his Maintenance, with King Polynnestor his Father in Law, he cries out.

* Virgil Æn-
eid. lib. 3. pag.
374. not Varior.
fig. 49.

-----* *Quid non Mortalia pectora cogis*

Auri sacra fames? -----

*What Dangers or what Mischiefs are so great,
to which the wicked Love of Money doth not force
Mankind?*

I need add no more than this one Instance out of the Holy Scripture; viz. *That of Ahab, King of Israel, of which we read in the first of Kings. c. 21.*

How did his Covetous Desire of Naboth's Vineyard torment him, and rob him of all the Pleasures that a Court or a Crown might else have afforded him? How did this plunge him into the worst of Crimes, the false Accusation and Murder of his innocent Neighbour? And lastly how did that Crime bring utter ruin and Destruction, not only upon himself but his whole Family and Posterity?

Thirdly, Neither is *Voluptuousness*, or the love of Pleasure, less Pernicious than the love of Money. This is the Natural Parent of all Crimes and Mischiefs.

To this purpose St. Paul brings in the *Lovers of themselves* as leading the Van, and the *Lovers of*

of Pleasures as bringing up the Rear of all Wickedness.

For describing to **Timothy* the horrid Crimes ^{* 2 to Tim. 2. 1.4.5.6.} of the last Times (*i. e.*) of the Times immediately preceding the Destruction of the Jews; he tells us, *that in the last Days Perillous Times shall come*, and the Reason he gives us in the following Words: For Men shall be Lovers of their own selves, Covetous, Boasters, Proud, Blaspheinous, Disobedient to Parents, Unthankful, Unholy, without Natural Affection, Truce-Breakers, False-Accusers, Incontinent, Fierce Despisers of those that are good, Traytors, High-minded, Lovers of Pleasures more than Lovers of God. And * St. Peter tells us, the Mischief and Misery they bring upon themselves: for speaking of such as take pleasure in Riot and Sport themselves in their ^{2 Pet. 2. 12, 13.} own Deceivings; he saith, *These, as Natural Brute Beasts, are made to be taken and destroyed, and shall utterly Perish in their own Corruption, and shall receive the Reward of Unrighteousness.* And indeed our own Experience may too sadly demonstrate all this to us. For what Wickedness is there so abominable, or what Misery so intolerable, to which he that gives up himself to the pursuit of any one Pleasure, is not necessarily exposed?

What Crime doth he baulk that stands in his way betwixt him and his beloved Pleasure?

How does the Voluptuous Prodigal destroy his Health, disturb his Reason, and ruine his Estate in the too eager Pursuit of his beloved Delight?

How doth he (like the Prodigal in the

Luke 15. 11.
17.

* Gospel) run away from his best Friends and nearest Relations, spend all his Portion, and waste all his substance in Riotous Living; till having brought himself to the Extremest Necessity, and having made himself more like a Swine than a Man, he is at length turn'd out to their Company, and is glad to feed upon the Swines husks?

How hath the Love of Pleasure conquered the most Glorious Conquerors, destroyed the most Invincible Armies, and ruined the greatest Monarchs of the World?

Hannibal, that could not be subdued by all the Roman force, lost the most Valiant Army by the Pleasures of Capua. So that Seneca saith too truly of him (*Epist* 11.) that he was *Armistinvictus, vitiis victus*; not overcome by others Armes, but Vanquish'd by his own Vices.

Xerxes whose Army in Forraging, destroyed whole Countries, and drank up whole Rivers as it went; who was the greatest Monarch then in the World, as well as the Richest; when he had so far given up himself to his Delights, that (as * Cicero tells us) by a publick Edit he proclaimed a Reward to any that could find out any new sort of pleasure, how suddenly did he lose that vast Army, and his greater Empire? So that the * Historian might well conclude; *What can be more filthy than those Vices, or what more hurtful, by which all Vertue is defaced, Victories languish, Glory is buried in Infamy, and all the Powers both of Soul and Body are utterly destroyed?* For they that are possessed with the inordinate Love of Pleasures seem to be like the Swine into whom the Legion of Devils had entred; they run head-

Cic. Tuscul.
Q. est lib. 5.

Valer. Max.
not. Varior. pag.
750. lin. 7.

headlong with the greatest Violence, to their own Destruction. Their beloved Pleasure so imployes all the Faculties of their Souls and all the Members of their Bodies, till they are fit for nothing that becomes a Man, and take care of nothing more than the present satisfaction, like the Brute Beasts; and then this their Prodigality reduceth them to the most miserable necessity, and thence into the worst of Crimes; till publick Justice (if no other private Accident hath done it before) brings them to the most unnatural and most shameful ends. This I am confident we shall find too true, by our own sad Experience. For if we enquire the Causes of all their Crimes, who suffer by the hands of the publick Executioners of Justice, we shall find that the immoderate pursuit of unlawful Pleasures hath most commonly hurried them to their own ruin. For few or none of such miserable Wretches but in their last and dying words are forc'd to confess, that their own Lusts and inordinate Passions, have brought them to all their Shame and Misery.

Amongst which none can be more exorbitant than that, concerning which, I am next to discourse of. *Viz.*

Fourthly, *Envy, Malice, or the Love of Revenge.*

4. Envy or Malice.

For neither is this a less Foolish or less Fatal Passion than any other: For whoever gives up himself to this Lust, does (as it were) stretch himself upon the Rack, and become his own Torturer. He pines himself away in the midst of all abundance, and starves whilst he possesseth the greatest plenty. He is his own Vulture, and Preys upon his own Bowels.

For

The Present Miseries

For, so deadly a Disease of the mind is this of Envy, that scarcely any thing the envious man eats or drinks, can give him any suitable Nourishment; but the most delicate Viands, are, by this Passion, turn'd into Gall and Bitterness.

It so fires, or, at least, so sours the Blood, and so burns up, or corrodes, the Vitals, that it soon dissolves the best temper'd Body beyond all the help of Art or Nature.

To what fatal Miseries is the man of Malice necessarily and incessantly expos'd? If his malicious Designs take, they are commonly so bloody, that his own Darts being cast back upon him by the hands of Justice, do slay himself: and if he misseth his deadly Aims, the Arrows that he shoots at others (like those that are shot directly upwards) fall down again upon his own head, and wound him, even unto Death.

He is in a much worse condition than any other Malefactor: For, he not only suffers for the Crimes he hath committed, but for those which he cannot act, this being one of his greatest Tortures, that he cannot do them.

A dreadful Example of this nature, the immortal * Dr. Harvey gives us of a Noble man, who having received some Affront which he was not able to revenge, took it so much to Heart, that his Passion swell'd him like Poyson, and as soon destroyed him; for, in a short time after, he dyed of a malignant Fever: and being dissected, his great Artery was found as big as the jugular Artery of an Oxe. So virulent a Venome does accompany this Passion; and so, certainly true is that of the holy Job. *Wrath killeth the Foolish*

*Libr. de Circu-
lat. Sanguin.*

Job. 5. 2.

Foolish man, and Every sheweth the Silly one.

Why should I mention the publick Calamities that it brings along with it, since they cannot but be visible to all Observers?

What Murders hath it not acted? What Schisms in the Church; or Seditions in the State, hath it not rais'd and carryed on? In a Word, what Mischief, or what Villany, can be so great which it hath not accomplish'd? All Histories are too full of sad Instances of this kind.

What unspeakable Mischief, what shameful Schisms, what abominable Seditions, Murders, and Treasons, over-spread all *Africa*, through the Envy of *Dondus* and his Party, because others were preferred before them? And how did their Animosities continue to divide them, till they lost their Country and Christianity both together; and are now so over-run with Heathens, that scarcely any Appearance of the Christian Religion is left amongst all the *African* Churches, which were, before these Divisions, as glorious for their Profession of, and constancy in the Christian Faith, as any Churches in the whole World.

What miserable Calamities did the Malice of the Leaders of three Factions or Sects, bring upon the *Jews*, when they were besieged in *Jerusalem*? No less than the sharpest Famine, the most unnatural Murders, the highest Profanations of all things sacred; and, in a Word, the utter desolation of their City and Temple, and the final Extirpation of their Government and Religion? So that they who were the most glorious People in the World, are become mere Vagabonds, and the Scorn and Derision of all Nations.

Vid. Optatum Milv.

Vid. Josephum de Bell. Jud.

The Present Miseries

I wish to God we had not too near Examples in the Divisions amongst our selves, proceeding from the same Cause, and that our Magistrates would take Care to suppress them, lest they proceed to the same sad Effects; *viz.* the utter Ruin of the best constituted Church and State in the whole World.

Vid. Livii Decad. Histor. Rom.

To add but one Instance more out of common History. How did the Envy of *Hanno*, and his Faction against *Amilcar*, ruine all the Affairs of *Carthage*, and laid the glorious City in the Dust, which otherwise had not fail'd of being the sole Empress of the whole Earth?

If we look into the Sacred Writings, we shall find that *Cain's* Envy spared not his own Brother, but made him become his Murderer. And the Envy of *Korah* and his Company, was the cause of the first Schism and Rebellion that we read of, even against *Moses* and *Aaron*; those very persons, who, by a mighty hand and miraculous Power, had delivered them from their *Aegyptian* Bondage; and drew upon themselves the most signal Punishment.

For God created a new thing, and made the Earth divide it self, that they might pass down quick into Hell who were the Dividers of Israel. What should I add more? Lest there should be any Evil too great to be the Effect of this Vice, Envy and Pride were the Causes even of Hell it self. And this now leads me to take notice of the last irregular Passion which I mentioned, that too often proves fatal to it's Followers, *viz.*

5 Pride and Ambition.

Fifthly, *Pride*, *Ambition*, or the immoderate Love of Honors.

And

And indeed, this may well follow Envy, for they are inseparable Companions, it being almost impossible for a man to be proud, unless he be envious; and altogether impossible to be envious, unless he be first proud and ambitious: and as ambitious and envious men are (like *Simeon* and *Levi*) Brethren in Iniquity, so they are no less nearly allied in Misery: For, as their Sins are much the same, so they suffer much the same Punishments.

Whatsoever Crime, Danger, or Disease, is the effect of Envy, may be also reckoned in the number of the miserable (tho' natural) Consequences of Pride and Ambition. For, as for publick Calamities, what Schisms, what Factions, what Wars, what Rebellions, what Desolations ever were in the World, in which Ambition had not an hand? For, as tho' there were no other Cause of these Mischiefs, *Solomon* saith, * *Only by Pride cometh all Contention.*

Prov. 13. 10.

And as for private Mischiefs, What Miseries can be so great, into which the proud man doth not involve himself and all his Partners? If he mis his Designs in climbing up on high, he most commonly breaks his Neck in the Fall: But, if he prospers a while, this encourages him to proceed unto such Crimes, the due Sense and Horror of which, are enough to break his Heart. For, from this Crime of Ambition (when it hath once got the absolute Dominion over a man) as from the Lyon's Den, in the Fable, we can see no Foot-steps backward; but if any man be so silly a Beast to be plung'd into it, he seldom, or never, escapes with Life. For, if we will believe the Experience of the wisest of men, he assures us, * *That Pride goeth before Destruction.*

Prov. 16. 18.

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The Present Miseries

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E

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The Present Miseries

But, suppose the utmost that can be thought on for the proud man's advantage, *viz.* that he reacheth his highest Aim and Design, and attains, by his Crimes, the highest honors; yet, the Crown he hath placed upon his Head, by wicked hands, tho' it be of pure Gold, sits as uneasie upon him, as a Crown of the sharpest Thorns; and not only wounds his Head, but his Heart too, with restless Cares and endless Fears. For, the Sense of his own Perfidiousness makes him so jealous lest all other men should be like himself, that he can trust no man; and the thoughts of his own Crimes makes him in *Cain's* Condition, to think every man he meets will certainly kill him; and these terrible Fears rais'd from without, together with the amazing Horrors of his Conscience within him, will scarcely let him sleep or eat, or enjoy any thing in quiet. So that whilst he sits upon a Throne, he is really more miserable than he that makes his Bed upon a Dunghil. For, besides the danger of Treachery from his Friends, (whose Wickedness he too well knows to have any just cause to trust them) and besides the continual Dreads of his own Soul, lest the Almighty Providence should overturn him; how mortally is he hated, and how continually is he baited by his Enemies, and pursued even to Death by the best of men, whom he hath injured, whose very Vertues ingage them (for the sake of the publick Safety, as well as of their private Security) in the most vigorous and bloody Designs against him? For, most commonly we see it true, that ambitious men that cannot be contented with their own state, (like the proud & rebellious *Absalom*, that was hanged by his own hair, in which was his main glory) are executed by their own Pride.

For,

For, whilst by Schism and Rebellion they pull down the Pillars of the Church and State, oft times they bury themselves in the Ruines that they make. Of this, I need give no other Instance than that of our late miserable Times amongst our selves. For, what profit had we from all that War and bloodshed amongst us? We only brought upon our selves worse than what we fear'd. We made our selves Slaves to the basest of men, because we could not be contented to be Subjects to the best of Princes; and for fear of bringing in Popery, we had well nigh destroyed Christianity. Nay, when the men of Schism and Rebellion were so prosperous, that they carried all before them, and had in the most barbarous manner, murdered the best of Kings and destroyed the best of Churches; and not only kill'd but had taken Possession too of all their Power and Estates; how did the all-wise and just Providence of God, by the most unexpected means, even in an Instant, turn the Wheel over them, and bring down their Pride to the greatest Shame?

Neither is the proud man's Grandure and Promotion his only miserable Condition; for, his whole Life is not only the greatest Vanity, but the greatest Misery and Vexation of Spirit. For, how does some little thing which he cannot have, rob him of all Content and Quiet, in enjoying what he hath?

Mordecai's stiff Knee takes from the ambitious Haman the relish of all the Honors of the greatest Court in the World; nay, the Power and Glory of a Crown, could afford no Rest nor Pleasure to the proud and envious Ahab, when once Naboth's Vineyard had appear'd in his sight. To describe the proud man's Life, were to represent unto you an

The Present Miseries

exact Copy of all kind of Folly and Misery. For what with his continual Plots and Contrivances, and his incessant Cares and Business; How does he Sacrifice his Health to his Ambition, for want of due Repast, or of quiet Repose? What with his Envy at others that are higher than himself, and his eager Desires after Preferment, together with his continual Fears lest he should miss of it, how is he rack'd with endless Tortures?

What with the baseness and durtiness of the way to his proud Designs; what with the many affronts and denials; what with his great hopes and sometimes his greater despair, a mixture of all which, he cannot but meet with in it; not to say any thing of the envy and scorn of others that attend his advancement, or the little satisfaction that he himself meets with in it; how is he fool'd and cheated with a Cloud instead of a Deity? In a word, how do the several Passions raised in him by these Causes, constantly torture his Mind and disorder his Body, till at length they bring upon him Misery, Diseases, and Death? I need not remind you of the many mischiefs this Vice exposeth us to: It threw down the Angels from Heaven, and cast our first Parents out of Paradise; it was the cause of the first Sins that ever were committed, and by consequence is the Mother of all Mischief, and of all Miseries: Nay, it still continues actually to produce these sad effects; for *where Pride is, there is Strife; and every evil work.*

Give me leave to add two or three practical deductions from what hath been said. If Misery and Death be the natural effects of every one of these Sins. *Viz. Pride, Envy, Voluptuousness, Uncleaness, Anger,*

and Mischiefs of Sin.

31

Anger, Gluttony, Drunkenness, Uncharitableness, Injustice, Profaneness, and Irreligion, what then remains? But that

First, We should all keep Watch and Ward against these Destroyers of Mankind. We are careful enough to keep our Houses from Fire, our Goods from Thieves, and our Bodies from Infection of the Plague; and shall we be so foolish to hug these Enemies of our Lives, and to follow these Sins which are no less destructive to us, than all those other dangers which we so much fear, and so earnestly endeavour to avoid? To this end let every one of us consider seriously what hath been said against that particular Sin to which he finds himself most inclined; let every one of us endeavour to mend himself, more than others, especially more than our Magistrates: let them alone to take care to amend the Publick by the Execution of those wholesome Laws which are establish'd in our Church and State; and let us, who are private Christians, *study to be quiet, and do our own Business (i.e.) to work out our own Salvation with fear and trembling*, by avoiding our sins which we know will no less destroy our present than our future safety and Happiness.

Secondly, If we are, or have been guilty of any of these Sins, or have seen others pursuing them with greediness, and yet neither we nor they have felt any of those Miseries or Mischiefs that are the natural effects of them, let us not from thence conclude, that the Preacher is deceived; but let us thank God for his Care and Providence over us, which only hath preserved us from being our own Murderers by pursuing our own Sins: and let this Patience and Long-Suffering of God, prevail with us,

The third and
last Deduction.

us, as we love our Lives to hate our Sins, and to break off from them by Repentance, lest by continuing in them, we provoke God Almighty to give us up to be destroyed by them.

Thirdly and Lastly, If our Sins are destructive to our present Happiness, then if we have any care for our health, or safety, for our ease, quiet, or contentment, or for our Lives themselves, let us not any longer delay our amendment; but let us immediately cast off all our Sins which are so dangerous and so hurtful to us. Delays (we know) can never be prudent when the danger is great and imminent. He that sees his House on Fire will not be so mad to squander away the present opportunity of quenching it; he that discerns some mortal disease arising in his Body, will lose no time in applying such Remedies as may prevent their danger. Why then are we so unreasonable and senseless to trifle away our time and opportunity of quenching the Fires of our Lusts, and of preventing the fatal dangers of our Sins? Especially since we know not if we neglect the present, whether God will give us any other opportunity in the time to come. For he himself hath told us, that ** His Spirit shall not always strive with Man.* The only shew of Reason, by which the Devil cheats too many of their Eternal Happiness, is this, *Viz.* That it is time enough to repent, when they are past their Pleasures, because there is some reason to hope that a Death-Bed-Repentance may be sincere and acceptable with God to the saving of our Souls. But though this Pretence is most presumptuous and groundless, yet the tempter could not have so much as this against us, if we did but consider that our
Sins

* Gen. 6.3.

and Mischiefs of Sin.

33.

Sins are as hurtful to our Bodies as to our Souls, that they as much prejudice our present Happiness, as they do our future; and therefore, that tho' it was possible (which we have no grounds at all to suppose, that a dying Repentance might come time enough to save our Souls, yet it will be absolutely too late (when Sin hath already destroyed us) to prevent the Miseries of our Bodies.

If therefore we have any care of our Lives or Happiness, if we have any concern either for our own good, or the good of the World; and to sum up all in one Word, if we would not add *SELF-MURDER* to the rest of our Crimes, let us put in practice that most necessary Exhortation of St. Paul, *Exhort one another daily, whilst it is called to day, lest any of you be hardened by the deceitfulness of Sin*; and to this purpose, let us seriously consider those Words of our Blessed Saviour; and sedately ask our selves this Question of his, *What shall it profit a man if he shall gain the whole World and lose himself, or bring upon himself his own Destruction?* For, since we are assured, that *as Righteousness tendeth to Life, so he that pursueth Evil, pursueth it to his own Death*. Surely, Common Prudence should perswade us no longer to hazard our present Welfare, by running on in such sinful Courses as may *bring upon us swift Destruction*, but to pursue the ways of Righteousness; that so we may avoid the miseries that follow the Pursuit of Evil.

To this End, I shall conclude all with the most divine, and most useful Words of St. Peter, (which are so beneficial to all Mankind, that I could wish they were written upon every man's Soul, in indelible

I Pet. 3. v. 10. *deleble Characters) viz. He that will love Life, and will see good Days, let him refrain his Tongue from Evil, and his Lips, that they speak no Guile: Let him eschew Evil, and do Good, let him seek peace, and ensue it. For, the Eyes of the Lord are upon the righteous, and his Ears are open unto their Prayers; but the Face of the Lord is against them that do Evil, and who will harm you (or who is he that shall harm you) if ye be Followers of that which is good.*

Now, that all of us may so follow that which is Good, and so eschew that which is Evil: that we may live happily in this Life, and be eternally happy in the Life to come, God of his Infinite Mercy grant, for Jesus Christ his sake; to whom, with the Father and the Holy Spirit, be ascribed (as is most due) all Power, Dominion, Praise, and Glory, now and for evermore. *Amen.*

F I N I S.

